

by K. Hooper



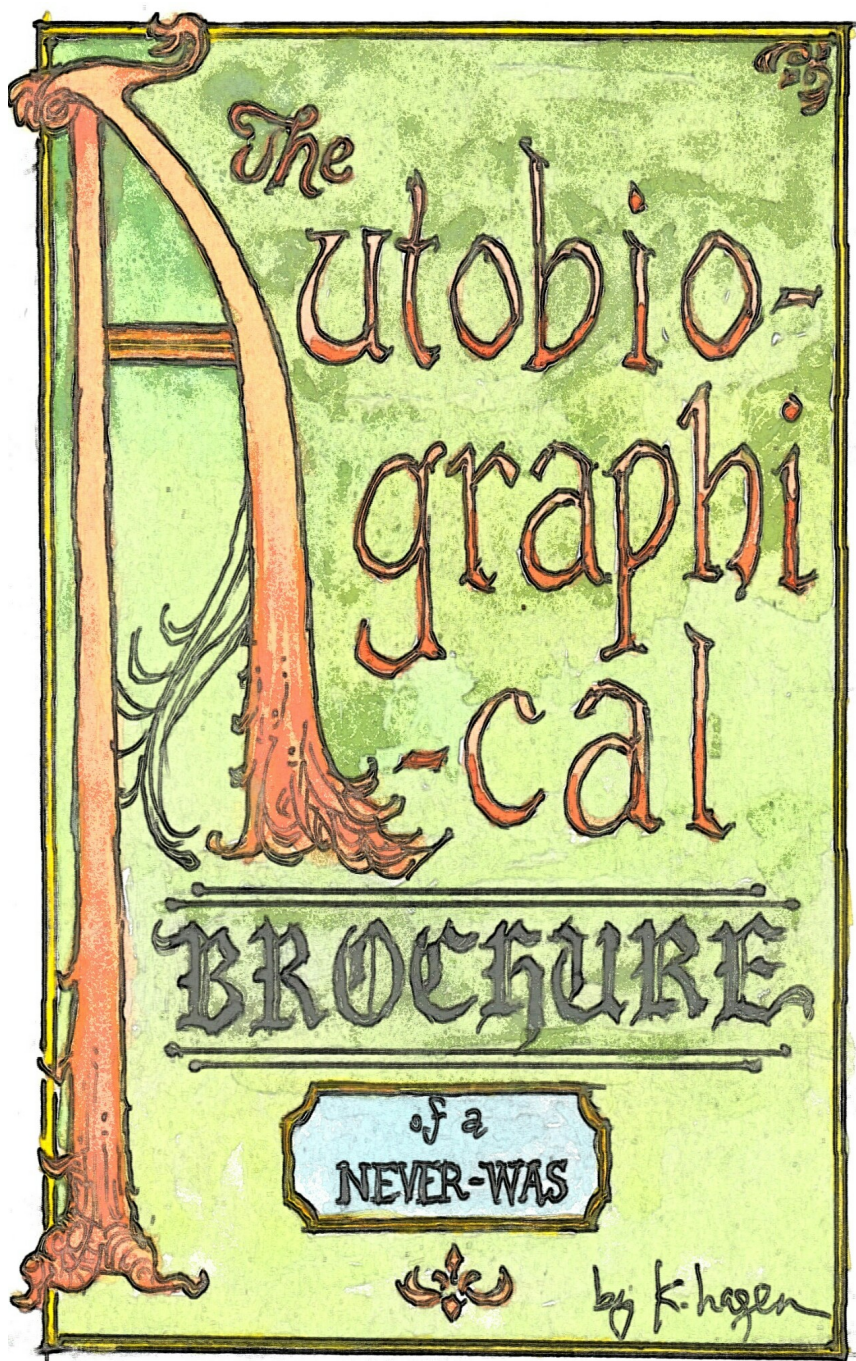
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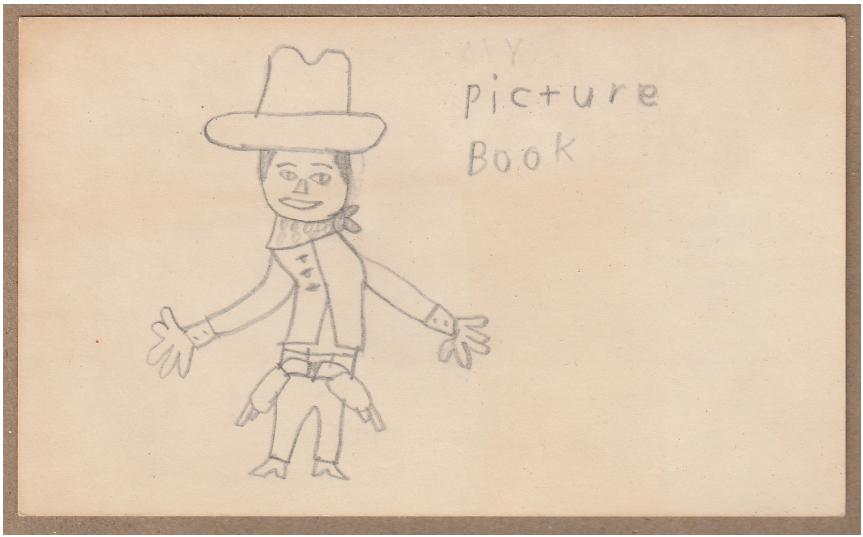
BROCHURE

of a  
NEVER-WAS



by K. Hagen





- in 1964 -

I was born in the Red River Valley area of Minnesota, in the bed of the ancient, glacial Lake Agassiz. Dad was a Lutheran pastor of Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish descent. Mom came from Grand Forks Norwegian immigrants.

We moved three times in my first five years, from Borup to Nevis to St. Paul, finally settling in Irwin, Iowa in 1969, when the population just about reached its peak at less than 450 people.

I loved to draw and make little picture books of cowboys, pirates, monsters and race cars. And I adored cartoons on TV. In those days I watched: Astro Boy, Speed Racer, Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!, Groovy Goolies, The Funky Phantom... and Sigmund and the Sea Monsters.

I'm sure it was the last of these - not a cartoon - that led to my first lyrical composition (to the tune of "Hail to the Chief") :



1977 by Publishers-Mall Syndicate, Inc. 103, Ave. 1977 PRINTED IN U.S.A.  
 This is a complete listing of all the products and services available in the field of occultism, magic, and the supernatural. It is a comprehensive guide to the world of the occult, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the subject. The listing includes a wide variety of products, from books and tapes to rituals and spells. It also includes information on the prices of these products, and on the companies that sell them. This is a truly comprehensive guide to the world of the occult, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the subject.

**THE ELECTRIC PENTACLE**  
 As used by CHANNIKI, the ghost finder.  
 This is just the opposite. It tells you where the ghost is, and how to get rid of it. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**SILENT DOG WHISTLE**  
 This whistle can be heard by your dog, but not by anyone else. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**HAIR-BOUND BOOKS BY FAMOUS AUTHORS**  
 These books are bound in the hair of famous authors. They are truly amazing, and are a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. They are available for \$1.00.

**JOY BUZZER**  
 This buzzer will make you feel like a king. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**MONSTER-SIZE SKELETON**  
 This skeleton is the size of a monster. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**7 FOOT MONSTER**  
 This monster is 7 feet tall. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**SECRET BOOK SAFE**  
 This safe is hidden in a book. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**THROW YOUR VOICE**  
 This device allows you to throw your voice. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**RAQUEL WELCH PILLOW**  
 This pillow is named after the actress Raquel Welch. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**SMOKE CLOUD**  
 This cloud is made of smoke. It is a truly amazing device, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the occult. It is available for \$1.00.

**ONION GUM**  
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The  
Auto-  
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Comic  
Book  
of a  
Never-  
Was



"NEVER-WAS?"  
"YEAH, I NEVER  
WAS ANYTHING MORE THAN WHAT  
I AM."  
"WELL, WHO IS?"  
"YOU HAVE A POINT  
THERE. STILL ONE I MIGHT  
IMAGINE..."





"I am the ghost of the Black Lagoon  
I steal from the rich and I give to the poor  
And you know what I do next - Oh, next?  
I steal some more!"

It wasn't until the next, jarring family move - to Indianola, Iowa in January, 1975 - that I started to hone a more cultivated taste in music. After a few years of failing at the violin and school chorus, I took up the guitar.

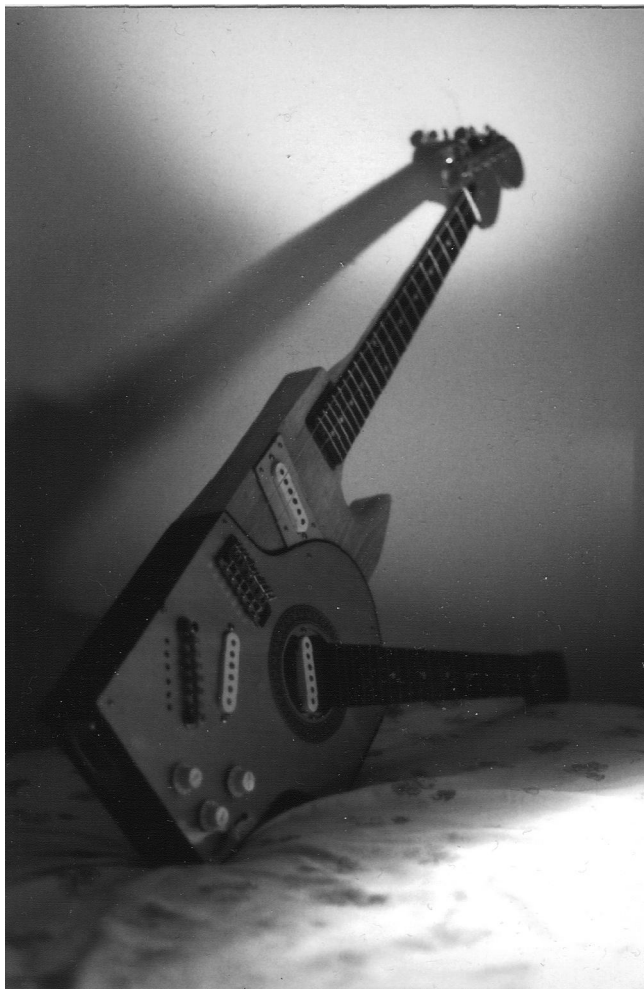
My first was a used, department store acoustic,

~ three ~

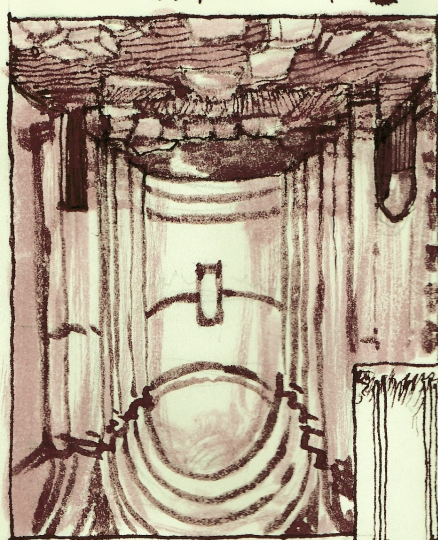
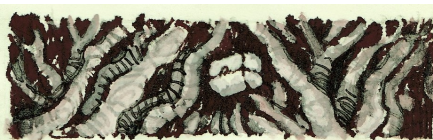


bought at the neighbor's garage sale for 75 cents (and he threw in "The Beatles Live! at the Star-Club in Hamburg, Germany; 1962." - German pressing).

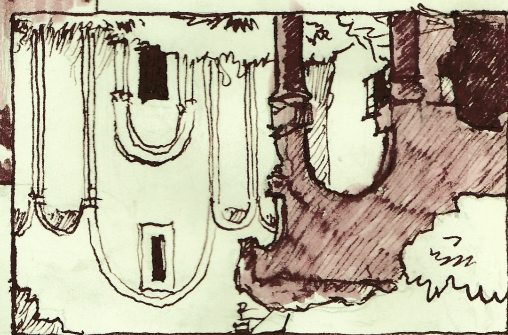
By the age of 16 I had a crappy electric guitar and a pretty cool Guild Thunder I reverb amp (c.1967) and I was learning to play my favorites: Beatles, Stones, Hendrix and Cream.



And amongst the roots,  
 a small casket contain-  
 ing a mysterious artefact...



He found an opening  
 into a long-abandoned  
 crypt. Emerging from  
 a wall amidst the debris were  
 the tangled roots of a  
 long-dead tree...



Searching for a  
 dry spot on the  
 floor to rest...



In a  
 land of  
 ancient ruins, he sought  
 shelter in a crumbling chapel...





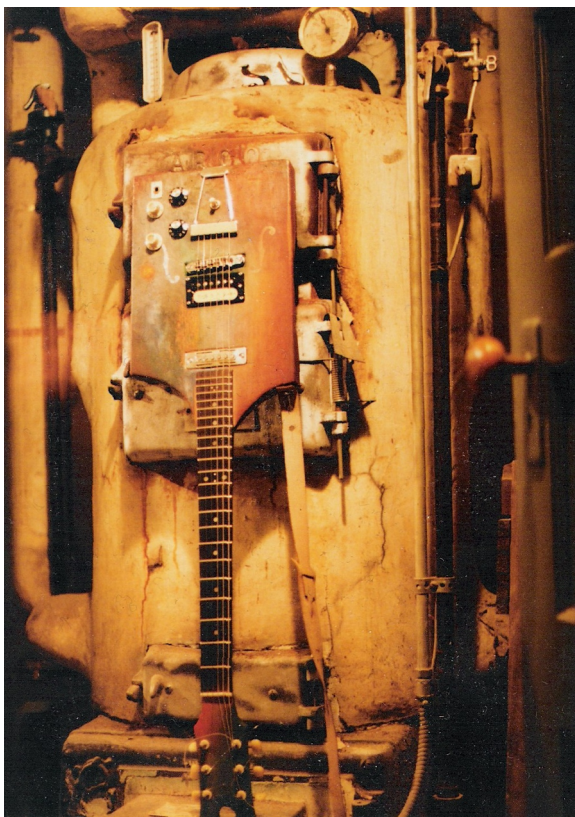


A foundational moment in my musical development came most distinctly to my ears when I turned on the radio and was absolutely transfixed by Jimi playing "Red House" - the Smash Hits mix - which built upon the memory of an ecstatic afternoon in headphones hearing "Sgt. Pepper" for the first time, and followed some time later by a glorious appreciation for the absurdity of Tyrannosaurus Rex and "A Beard of Stars".

...I had to try my hand at writing songs...







And I built my first electric guitar from scratch in my friend, Kurt's father's garage. Solid mahogany body and neck with a rosewood fretboard - hardware and pickups scavanged from cheap electrics. (Kurt's had a maple neck and a body made from rough pine pallet boards.)

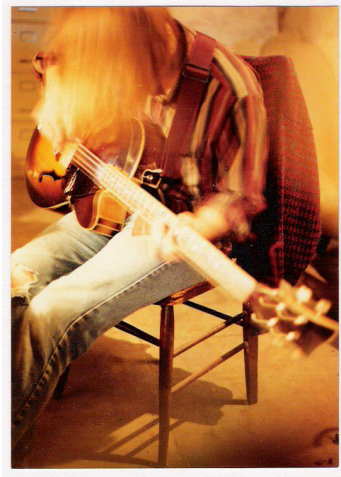
This one went through many alterations over the years, adding and removing and, ultimately, destroying the poor thing.



all over "Latest and Latest", especially on Tracks 6 and 15. The 'JFB' is only in a couple of videos.

pg. 20... rectangle guitar: also in a video, as well as the solos on Track 5 of "Latest..." The greenie is on that collection as well.

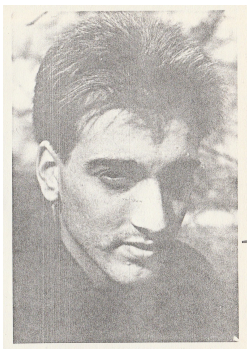
pg. 21... mando family: "Four Strings More".



pg. 22... Synthitar: "Scenes of Nefarious Intent", Tracks 6, 7 and 8. The 'R.S.' Theremin: Demos Seven, Track 5 and "Four Strings More", Track 6. The WP-20 is on "The Ex.Pro..." collection, Track 1.

pg. 23... tin fiddle: Track 4 of "Four Strings to Heaven". The Harpitar and Guitarang feature on Tracks 1 and 2 of "Noise..."

pg. 24... the box-gurdy can be heard at the end of Track 2, "Four Strings to Heaven". The two 'leles are all over that one as well.



*I can't leave this without mention of my late Mother and Father and my cohort in all things Guitar: Kurt Bloom (1965 - 2018). Thank You.*

*~ twenty-seven ~*





## *index:*

pg. 4... guitar made from my first acoustic and the neck of my first electric. (Never recorded.)

pg. 6... the first guitar I built can be heard throughout the "Demos" recordings, 1-10.

pg. 9... same with the Push-me Pull-you bass. The 12-string in the shape of a 1968 Volvo key makes its appearance on Demos Three, especially Track 13. The 6-string cigar-box is perhaps best exemplified on Track 18 of Demos Six.

pg. 11... pretty much all of the electronica can be heard on "Noise for Tots", especially Track 4.

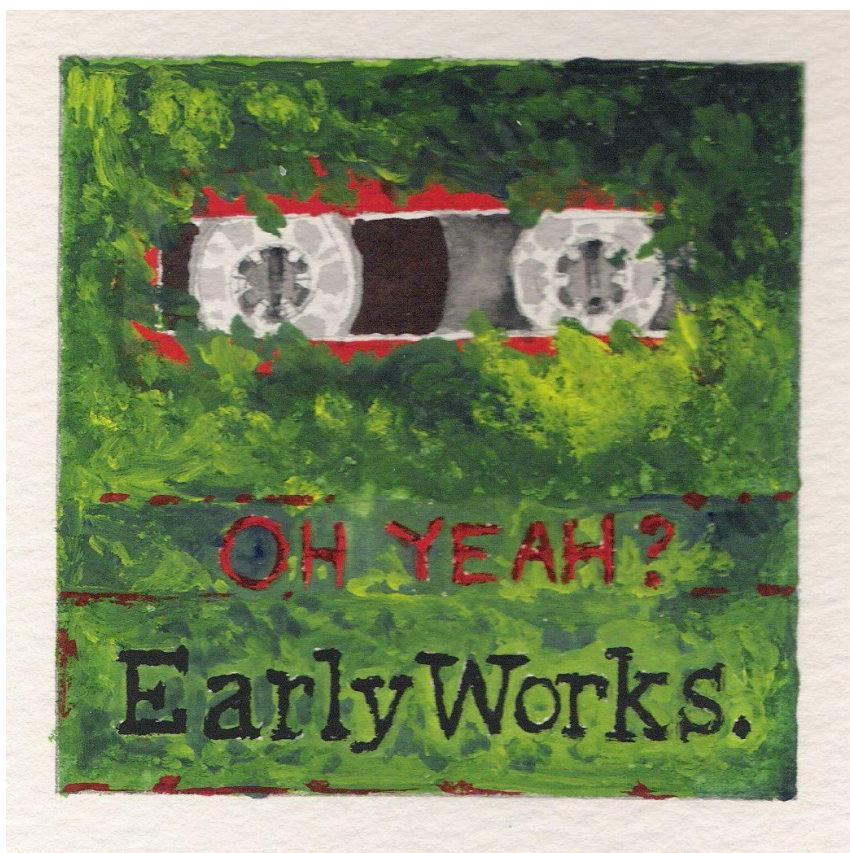
pg. 13... the Guilutar is played on "The Ex.Pro.Hum.Dev.", Track 4. Hurdy-lele: hm.. I don't think it's on anything... but the Organitar is certainly on "Noise for Tots", T-4.

pg. 19... Grefner: "Noise..." and



The only gigging I did in Iowa was on bass with a country/hillbilly band. We played our high school talent show, a bar at the south edge of Des Moines, the town square and a park. I think we rehearsed as many times as we gigged.

After graduation, 1983, I moved with my family back to St. Paul and that's when I started to record myself, on simple cassette tape recorders...







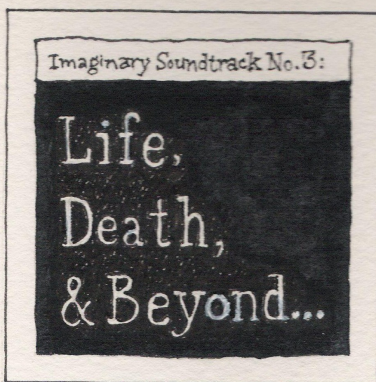
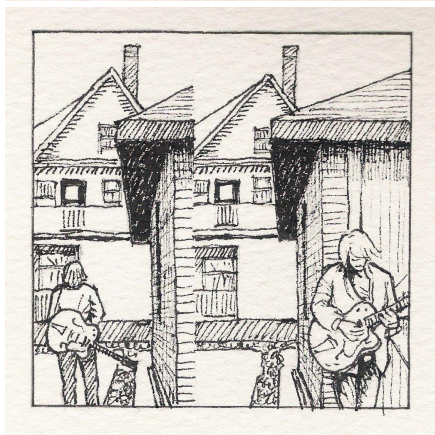
Sometime in the mid-'80s I bought a cassette 4-track.

My friend, Mike, in Iowa, sent me a Casiotone MT-52 keyboard/drum machine and a Realistic microphone...

I had a guitar shop build an alder body for my old Valiant bass neck...

Bought a 1970s Fender Mustang in Des Moines, on a visit back to Iowa...

Won a drawing for a Gibson Moderne and traded it a year or two later for a 1964 Gretsch 6118, Double Anniversary, in two-tone Smoke Green...



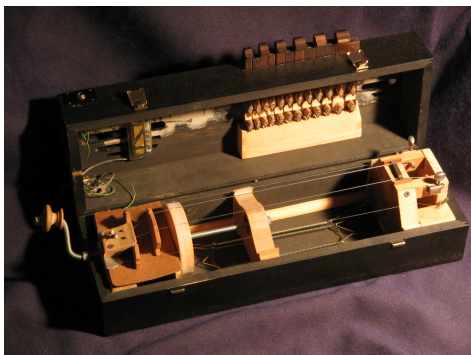
I played in a few bands over the years, in Minneapolis, whose names would only be known to a few people.

I mostly wrote and recorded alone.

The drawn and painted "album covers" pictured throughout this brochure represent the 30-year collection of recordings that are freely available to hear on [archive.org](https://archive.org), username: Kris Hagen.

There are also some videos to be seen on YouTube, username: Kristofer Hagen. (Who knows? I might add more crappy old VHS some day...)



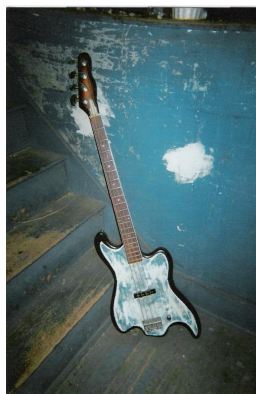


At the upper right: an electric box-hurdy gurdy made out of a Jeroboam-size champagne case and a bunch of scrap wood. It sounds like a box of bees!

Lower right: cigar box kalimbalele. The scroll on the peghead was fun to carve.

Lower left: the Tambouranjolele. Yee-haw.

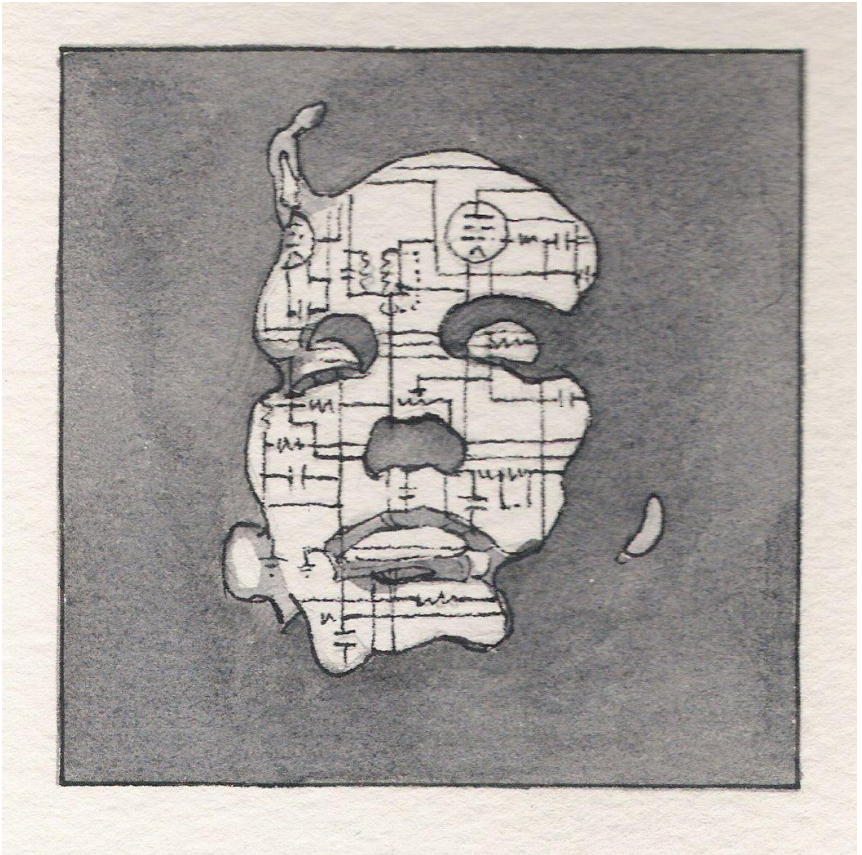
...and I continued to dabble with guitar-building...

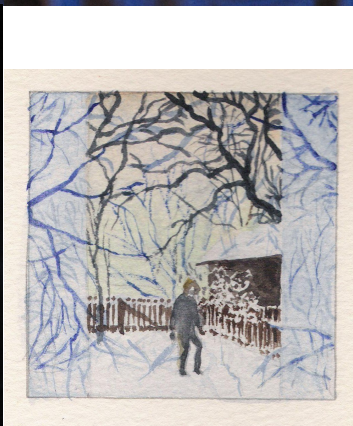




It must have been about 1992, living in Minneapolis, when I bought an old DOD "Distortion +" pedal and opened it up to find what looked to be some ridiculously basic electronics. I set myself the task of duplicating it... bought a Forrest M. Mims III book from Radio Shack... figured things out... gathered the parts... got a circuit board etching kit... put it all together... and it worked!

Of course, it probably cost almost as much to build the first one as to buy the original... but it was a learning experience that would lead to other adventures down the line.



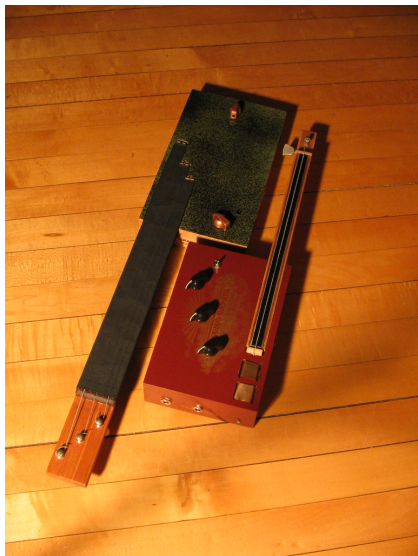


A cookie tin fiddle with fishing rod bow.

A Harpitar, with two sets of four strings, a kalimba bridge (very sonorous rake tines) and an electric guitar pickup.

And an electric Guitarang... fashioned after the Eastern instrument that's strummed and "fretted" with tangents - in this case, typewriter keys on springs.





More electronica... top left: "Synthitars", Ralph and Alice, which contain ribbon-controlled oscillators (guitar strings and VHS tape). Ralph has three and an opto-isolator tremolo effect. Alice has one oscillator and a white noise generator, bent audio amp circuit and a pair of touch points for further mayhem. Right: a theremin in a cigar box and, Left: my version of the "Waveform Processing WP-20 Mini-Synth Sound Effects Synthesizer" - awesome circuit I found on the web (originally from 1980).



Eventually, I got the bug to try more circuits but I really didn't understand the math and the grounding. What resulted was my own, independent discovery of "circuit-bending". This led to more experimentation, some understanding and some slightly more advanced electronics projects.

[Above: bent noise devices built into a pedal and a super-8 camera. Below, left: a variety of effects pedals ranging from fuzz to 'voice-changing' robot and tremolo/sitar simulator. Below, right: The "Telephorgan" whale song generator.]





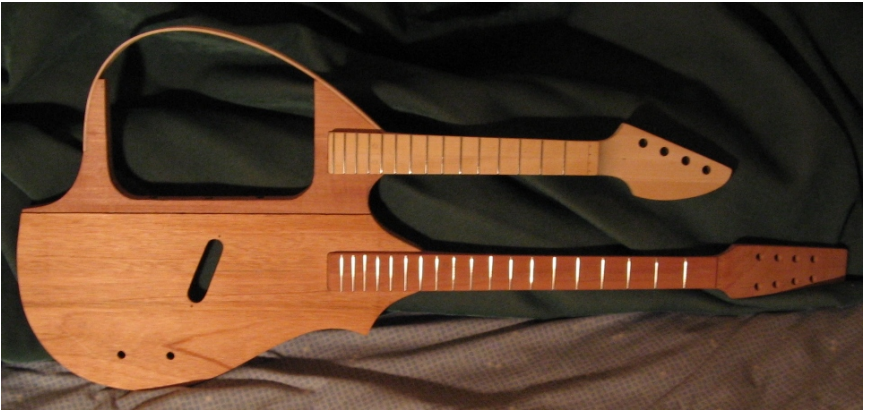


Around 2000/01 I bought a used Tascam 388 8-track reel-to-reel recorder and started collecting/building all kinds of odd-ball instruments and devices - mostly on the cheap. My lo-fi sensibilities never left me and I s'pose I've suffered from a disdain for most things "polished".

Experimentation was the ideal. A love for anything unconventional, esoteric, ancient, supernatural or psychedelic. A search for something so assuredly unattainable... such has been my lifelong frustration!

I always, only and ever recorded whatever came to mind without any conscious pretense. The instruments I built were mostly follies.

*~ twelve ~*



My mandolin family consists of a hollow octo-mando, a solid electric, with attached hollow uke and a rediculously solid/hollow little mandolin made of cherry and teak, strangely constructed after the style of a medieval gittern...





Here, on the left, is a reimagining of the first electric I built. It's hollow with a pair of old Magnatone pickups and a built-in Treble Boost circuit.

Below is the neck from the dismantled Organitar with a nice, new, chambered body.





Above: the Guilutar with keyed zither insert (and two cut-away paintings).  
Below: a Hurdy-lele - concert scale.  
Right: the Organitar, which incorporates a six-octave organ with pitch-bend pad.







Binding books - sometimes in boxes - became an interest in the 1990s (Collected Ghost Stories of M.R. James, "The Warlock of Love" by Marc Bolan, and a blank project journal in a cigar box, for example) as well as film, video and photography. And I made LOTS of photo-copy books...

~ *fourteen* ~



I did build a few pretty standard guitars over the years. Here's a small hollowbody, on the left, which I call 'Grefner' (part Gretsch, part Hofner Club) and above is the 'JFB' - modeled somewhat after the Gretsch Jet Fire Bird.



*The Kiss of a Vampire, 1916.*



*The Perils of Our Girl Reporters, 1916.*





SCENES FROM THE

GALLERY



